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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for performing handwriting recognition for handwritten characters of a language having character stroke order rules, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

storing a respective reference parameter set of a plurality of reference character strokes of a reference character in a reference character dictionary, wherein each of the respective reference parameter sets of each of the plurality of reference character strokes have an associated reference sequence number;

receiving a stroke parameter set derived from user input of a handwritten stroke, wherein the handwritten stroke is one of a plurality of strokes required for writing a character;

identifying a stroke sequence number of the stroke parameter set; and

responsive to identification of the stroke sequence number, comparing the stroke parameter set with a reference parameter set having an associated reference sequence number equal to the stroke sequence number, wherein the comparison excludes at least one of the reference parameter sets.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of storing includes:

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maintaining each reference parameter set in respective fields of a table, wherein each of the stroke order sequence numbers is derived from a respective field.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of identifying includes:

incrementing a counter value on receipt of a stroke parameter set, the counter value corresponding to the stroke sequence number.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of comparing includes:

excluding each reference parameter set having an associated reference sequence number not equal to the stroke sequence number.

5. The method according to claim 1, further including:

receiving an indication that a user has knowledge of the stroke order rules.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of comparing includes:

comparing, with the stroke parameter set, a reference parameter set with an associated reference sequence number within one of the stroke sequence number.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of storing includes:

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storing reference parameter sets of a plurality of characters in the reference character dictionary.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein each of the reference parameter sets of the plurality of characters are stored in respective records of the reference character dictionary, each record including a data element having a value equal to a number of constituent strokes of the respective character.

9. The method according to claim 8, further including:

excluding, from the comparison, the reference parameter sets of a record having the data element value less than the stroke sequence number.

10. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for performing handwriting recognition of a language having character stroke order rules comprising:

a reference character dictionary including a record defining a reference character, the record including a plurality of reference parameter sets each respectively defining attributes of a stroke of the reference character, each of the reference parameter sets associated with a reference sequence number; and

instructions for receiving a stroke parameter set derived from a handwritten character stroke and for identifying a stroke sequence number in which the stroke was input by a user, responsive to identifying the stroke

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sequence number, comparing the stroke parameter set with a reference parameter set having a reference sequence number equal to the stroke sequence number and excluding a reference parameter set from the comparison that has a reference sequence number not equal to the stroke sequence number.

11. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein each of the reference parameter sets are stored in respective fields of the dictionary, the reference sequence number determined by the field.

12. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein the first instruction identify a reference parameter set having an associated reference sequence number value within one of the stroke sequence number, and compare the stroke parameter set with the reference parameter set having the reference sequence number value within one of the stroke sequence number.

13. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein the record includes a data element having a value specifying a number of constituent strokes of the reference character.

14. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein the reference character dictionary includes a second record having at least one reference parameter set defining attributes of a stroke of a second reference character and a data element value specifying a number of

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constituent strokes of the second reference character, wherein the instructions, responsive to a determination that the number of constituent strokes of the second reference character is less than the stroke sequence number, exclude the reference parameter set of the second record from a comparison with the stroke parameter set.

15. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein the set of instructions, responsive to receiving the stroke parameter set, increments a counter that identifies the stroke sequence number.

16. A data processing system comprising:

a reference character dictionary including a record having a plurality of reference parameter sets each defining attributes of a respective stroke of a reference character, each respective reference parameter set having an associated reference sequence number;

a memory that contains a set of instructions; and

a processing unit, responsive to execution of the set of instructions, for receiving a stroke parameter set describing attributes of a handwritten stroke and for determining a stroke sequence number in which the handwritten stroke was input, responsive to determining the stroke sequence number, comparing the stroke parameter set with a reference parameter set having a reference sequence number equal to the stroke sequence number, the comparison excluding a reference parameter set having a reference sequence number not equal to the stroke sequence number.

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17. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the reference parameter sets are maintained in fields of a table, the first instructions determining the reference sequence numbers of the reference parameter sets by the fields in which the reference parameter sets are stored.

18. The data processing system according to claim 16, wherein the set of instructions are adapted to identify a reference parameter set having a reference sequence number within a predefined value of the stroke sequence number, responsive to identifying the reference parameter set, and compare the stroke parameter set with the identified reference parameter set.

19. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the reference character dictionary includes a second record having a data element having a value indicating a number of constituent strokes of a second reference character, the set of instructions, responsive to determining the data element value is less than the stroke sequence number, excluding reference parameter sets of the second record from comparison with the stroke parameter set.

20. The data processing system according to claim 16, wherein the record includes a data element having a value indicating a number of constituent strokes of the reference character, the set of instructions, responsive to reading the data element, for determining a number of

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the reference parameter sets to exclude from the comparison, the number of reference parameter sets excluded dependent on the value of the data element.